

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4727

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 13100

E.O. LL652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, WB, UK

SUBJ: BACKGROUND OF BRITISH REACTIONS TO SOVIET PROPOSAL

(QA ANNIVERSARY)

REF: (A) STATE 204050; (B) MOSCOW 13079

1. DAVID BEATTIE, ACTING HEAD OF WEST EUROPEAN DEPT.'
FCO, GAVE EMBASSY OFFICER BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE ON
BRITISH REACTION TO SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE OF TELE-
GRAMS ON OCCASION OF QA ANNIVERSARY DURING CALL AUG. 18.

2. ON INITIAL BLUSH, BRITISH HAD SEEN SOME MERIT IN
SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS BETWEEN THE
FOUR SIGNATORIES AT QA ANNIVERSARY TIME. INITIAL REACTION
OF BRITISH IN BONN GROUP, THEREFORE, HAD NOT BEEN NEGA-
TIVE. UPON STUDYING SOVIET PROPOSAL, FCO SAW LIKELIHOOD
SOVIET PROPOSAL WOULD LEAD TO SOME TYPE OF QUADRIPARTITE
DISCUSSION ON STATUS OF BERLIN WHICH BRITISH WOULD SEEK
TO AVOID.

3. SECOND FACTOR IN DEVELOPING NEGATIVE POSITION WAS
THAT EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS BETWEEN FOUR POWERS WOULD PUT
BERLIN FORWARD AS A POSSIBLE ISSUE IN THE UPCOMING FRG
ELECTIONS. IN SO FAR AS POSSIBLE, BRITISH HOPE THAT
BERLIN WILL NOT PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN GERMAN ELECT-
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IONS AND, THEREFORE, DECIDED TO TURN DOWN SOVIET INITIA-

TIVE.

4. OCCURRENCE OF INCIDENTS ALONG THE BORDER, AND MOST RECENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH COMMEMORATION OF ERECTION OF BERLIN WALL, HAVE CONFIRMED BRITISH OPINIONS. FINAL NEGATIVE STRENGTHENING HAS BEEN SOVIET REJECTION OF PROPOSALS FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO SECURE BERLIN REPRESENTATION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. FCO BELIEVES THREE WESTERN POWERS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS COOPERATING WITH SOVIET INITIATIVE ON QA ANNIVERSARY AT SAME TIME SOVIETS ARE ACTING AGAINST THREE ALLIED POWERS ON DIRECT ELECTIONS ISSUE.

5. BEATTIE NOTED THAT FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICER IN LONDON HAD CALLED AT FCO TO REINFORCE FRENCH POSITION AS DECLARED IN BONN GROUP MEETINGS. SINCE EMBOFF HAD NOT PRODUCED ANY NEW MATERIAL IN ASKING FCO TO SUPPORT FRENCH POSITION, BEATTIE SAID HE BELIEVED EMBOFF WAS SIMPLY CARRYING OUT PERFUNCTORY INSTRUCTIONS FROM QUAI. BEATTIE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS AN "UNUSUAL" STEP, NOT FREQUENTLY USED BY QUADRIPARTITE SIGNATORIES. BEATTIE EXPECTED THAT FRENCH WILL NOW DROP THEIR INITIATIVE TO SECURE US AND UK AGREEMENT IN THE BONN GROUP AND THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WILL "DIE ON THE VINE". IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, BEATTIE SAID THAT FCO DOES NOT EXPECT FRENCH, HAVING BEEN REBUFFED, WOULD WISH TO UNDERTAKE BILATERAL EXCHANGE WITH SOVIETS ALONE. IF THE FRENCH SHOULD INDICATE THIS AS THEIR NEXT MOVE, BEATTIE BELIEVES US AND UK WOULD PERFORCE HAVE TO AGREE TO SOME TYPE OF ANNIVERSARY STATEMENT.

6. FCO SEES, ACCORDING TO BEATTIE, MUCH GREATER DIFFICULTY IN ARRIVING AT THREE-POWER RESPONSE TO SOVIET ACTION ON DIRECT ELECTIONS. THIS ISSUE, HE SAID, WILL BE HANDLED PRIMARILY WITHIN BONN GROUP, BUT HE SUSPECTS ALLIED RESPONSE WILL BE TIME-CONSUMING AND DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE.

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